DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 464 781 RC 023 503

AUTHOR Das Gupta, Monica; Lee, Sunhwa; Uberoi, Patricia; Wang, Danning; Wang, Lihong; Zhang, Xiaodan

TITLE State Policies and Women's Autonomy in China, the Republic of Korea, and India, 1950-2000: Lessons from Contrasting Experiences. Working Paper.
INSTITUTION World Bank, Washington, DC.
REPORT NO WP-2497
PUB DATE 2000-00-00
NOTE 36p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Population Association of America (65th, Los Angeles, CA, March 23-25, 2000).
AVAILABLE FROM For full text: http://econ.worldbank.org/view.php?topic=22&type=5&id=1307.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Access to Education; *Empowerment; Equal Opportunities (Jobs); *Females; Foreign Countries; Kinship; Mass Media Effects; Modernization; *Personal Autonomy; Public Health; *Public Policy; Rural Urban Differences; Rural Women; Sex Bias; Sex Discrimination; *Sex Role; *Social Change; Social History; Social Structure; Womens Education
IDENTIFIERS China; Family Law; India; South Korea

ABSTRACT

This paper compares the influence of state policies on gender roles and women's empowerment in China, India, and South Korea. In 1950, these newly formed states were largely poor and agrarian, with common cultural factors that placed similar severe constraints on women's autonomy. The three countries followed very different paths of development, which have had a tremendous impact on gender outcomes. Today the countries show striking differences in the extent of gender equity achieved, with China showing the most gender equity and South Korea the least. India has achieved considerable improvement in gender equity, but both men and women continue to struggle with poverty, illiteracy, and poor health conditions. Following an overview of kinship systems and the construction of gender in the three countries, this paper focuses on several key issues: access to education, employment and income patterns, women's health and health education, family law and the legal rights of women, and state efforts to influence gender-related values and behaviors through mass communication. The experiences of these three countries suggest that even when states are interested in promoting gender equity, their actions are often constrained by the desire to maintain stable family structures. In addition, it is very difficult for states to alter inequitable rural rules of residence and land ownership, which form part of the moral order of rural society. Transition to an urban economy often loosens the constraints to gender equity. The impact of policies to provide opportunities for women's empowerment have been greatly enhanced by communication efforts to alter cultural values that impede women's access to those opportunities. (Contains 59 references.) (SV)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 464 781

Working Paper No.: 2497

Paper presented at the Population Association of America Annual Meeting 2000.
Background paper for the World Bank's Gender Policy Research Report

STATE POLICIES AND WOMEN'S AUTONOMY IN CHINA, THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA, AND INDIA 1950-2000: Lessons from contrasting experiences

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Monica Das Gupta*
Sunhwa Lee
Patricia Uberoi
Danning Wang
Lihong Wang
Xiaodan Zhang

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE AND IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA FOR ERIC COLLECTION SUBSCRIBERS ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
J. Feather
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
2A

Abstract

We compare changes in gender roles and women's empowerment in China, the Republic of Korea, and India. Around 1950, when all these countries had new governments following revolution or the end of colonial rule, they were largely poor and agrarian, with many cultural commonalities which placed similar severe constraints on women's autonomy. They adopted very different paths of development, which are known to have profoundly affected development outcomes in these countries. However, these choices have also had tremendous impact on gender outcomes, and today these countries show striking differences in the extent of gender equity achieved: China has achieved the most, and the Republic of Korea the least. We conclude that:

- States can exert enormous influence over gender equity. They can mitigate cultural influences on women's autonomy (as in China and India), or *slow down* the pace of change in gender equity despite rapid integration of women in education, formal employment and urbanization (as in the Republic of Korea).
- The impact of policies to provide *opportunities* for women's empowerment can be greatly enhanced if accompanied by communication efforts to alter cultural values which place heavy constraints to women's *accessing* these opportunities.

* Development Research Group, The World Bank, 1818 H Street NW, Washington DC 20433,USA. Email: mdasgupta@worldbank.org

RC 023503

Introduction

States implement a variety of interventions which directly and indirectly alter women's capabilities, including legislation pertaining to the family and to the workplace, political representation, forms of affirmative action, broader development strategies relating to economic and social development, and the establishment of institutions of modern governance. However, women's ability to benefit from such interventions can be heavily constrained by their relative voicelessness *within the household and their immediate community*. Policies need to be designed synergistically, to not only provide opportunities for greater empowerment through measures such as legislation and credit schemes, but also measures to alter values which constrain women from accessing these opportunities.

We examine the lessons from state policies in China, South Korea and Northern India to understand how states can be more effective in reducing women's social marginalization and increasing their capabilities. The reason for selecting these settings is that they share certain aspects of social organization which create especial obstacles to women's participation in development: *above and beyond* the more global issues of women's burden of domestic work and inadequate access to productive resources. Strong commonalities in their systems of kinship and inheritance generate a stark and extremely effective logic of marginalizing women and making them powerless in public life and also, during their youth, in domestic life — which is reflected in some of the highest rates of excess female child mortality in the world (Table 1, Das Gupta 1995, 1999).

What makes a comparison of these countries especially interesting is the fact that they all had a new beginning around 1950, due either to the end of colonial rule or revolution. At that time, they were all essentially poor agrarian societies (Table 2) with a large agenda of nation-building and development ahead of them. Women's lives were also fairly similar: they worked long hours to help make ends meet in their peasant households, and suffered maternal depletion from high levels of fertility and child mortality. In addition they coped with the powerlessness imposed by their position in the family. Since then, these countries have taken very different political and developmental paths, leading to quite different developmental achievements today (Table 3). Today, Republic of Korea today is highly urbanized and industrialized, with high levels of per capita income, life expectancy and education. India is still largely rural, with relatively low levels of income, life expectancy and education, and China is somewhere in between these two countries along these indices.

The three countries also differ enormously in the kinds of policies used to incorporate women into mainstream society, as a result of which the position of women has also taken quite divergent paths. These contrasts offer the opportunity to examine the effect of different developmental and policy settings have impacted on women's living conditions and autonomy (Figure 1). To summarize our argument, we argue that the Communist Chinese state has made substantial strides in improving women's lives, both through raising living standards as well as through a synergistic mix of policies aimed at creating gender equity. Republic of Korean state policies have sought successfully to achieve rapid economic growth while maintaining fundamental aspects of family organization

deeply inimical to gender equity. As a consequence, women now have high living standards and are also incorporated extensively into the formal labor force, but have gained relatively little in autonomy. By contrast, the Indian state has a disappointing record on raising living standards, but has been moderately successful in encouraging gender equity.

Below, we describe the broad outlines of the system of kinship and inheritance in these settings, which so powerfully shape gender relations and women's autonomy. We then discuss some key dimensions along which gender issues have been addressed in the development policies pursued by the three countries during the second half of the twentieth century. Of course, outcomes in gender equity result from the interplay of many economic and social factors. We single out four issues for special emphasis: education and employment, women's health, family law and efforts to influence gender-related values and behavior through mass communication.

I Kinship Systems and the Construction of Gender in the three settings

These three settings have rigidly patrilineal kinship systems whose central features are strikingly similar, despite considerable local variation in detail. Since gender analyses often discuss the problems of patriarchy, it is necessary to clarify what is so exceptional about these particular family systems, and why they are so effective at marginalizing women. *Patrilineality* means that group membership is passed on through the male line. Typically, this involves passing on the main productive assets through the male line, which constrains women's ability to be economically viable without being attached to a man. *Patrilocality* means that it is normative for couples to live in the man's home. Women have rights of maintenance as daughters in their natal home, and as wives in their husband's home, but they have no rights to own key productive assets such as land. The combination of rigid patrilineality and patrilocality essentially means that women have little independent social or legal personhood.

The logic of patrilineality is very rigid in these societies. For example, a man without sons would normally seek to adopt one from amongst his male kin rather than let a daughter inherit. Access to key economic and social assets depended on one's position in a lineage, so enormous importance is placed on maintaining careful records of lineage ties between men for generations on end. Families without sons are recorded as having died out. Thus it is that only *men* constitute and reproduce the social order. The mother merely gives birth: it is through the father that a child acquires a social identity and is incorporated into the social order.[1] Since only boys remain in the lineage, the significant social reproduction is that by the father of the son. Men are the fixed points in this social order, and women are the moving points because when they marry they leave their home and lineage, and are absorbed into their husband's lineage.

[1] In India, the mother's caste may affect that of her child in the rare event that her caste status is very different from that of her husband.

While women are socially marginalized, this is not to say that women are not valued in the household: wives are valuable sources of labor and progeny. By the same token, daughters have very limited value to their parents, as they are lost to their parents on marriage. An adult woman has no socially acceptable role in her parental family except as a visitor, nor can she have rights to their productive assets except for gifts on ritual occasions. As an adult she becomes extraneous to her family of birth, her appropriate position being a wife in another family. She must leave and make way for incoming daughters-in-law.[2]

Illustrative account of women's position in the household in these settings:

A description of women's lives in the North Indian village of Rampur around 1975[3] illustrates some of the constraints under which women live in such rigidly patrilineal societies. A young girl is trained to be tough and hardworking, yet completely subservient to the decisions of her male kin. Nevertheless, she enjoys a certain amount of personal freedom and autonomy in her own village, where all the men are her classificatory brothers, but this will be lost after marriage and not regained until old age.

When she marries and moves to her husband's village, a girl's behaviour must undergo a dramatic transformation. She loses almost all voice and autonomy. In her husband's village she is a stranger, and custom requires that she remain with head bowed, not speaking. On her first visit, she must sit silently while the women of the family and their friends scrutinize and evaluate her. When visiting her parents' village, she is again free to be as mobile and vocal as before.

A young bride's personal and public behaviour is monitored by a whole array of women, including her husband's mother, aunts, grandmother, sisters, and sisters-in-law. All the men in the household older than her husband are in a position of remote authority over her. She is at the bottom of both the *age hierarchy* as well as the *gender hierarchy* of the household, which means that she has minimal autonomy. She is given the most onerous household tasks, waking before dawn to fetch water, grind flour and churn butter.

With very limited opportunity or permission to get to know others in her marital village, she is usually very lonely and has little opportunity to make friends or participate in village life. At home myriad ways are used to keep the young wife and her husband apart, to delay the growth of a bond between them. Their daily tasks are performed mostly in different locations. Other occasions for marital privacy are also restricted. After completing the long day's chores, a young woman is expected to massage her mother-in-law's legs before being given permission to go to sleep.

A woman's status rises when she has her first son. As her sons grow, her status increases until eventually she too becomes a mother-in-law. She is not called by her own name: instead, she will first be called "X's wife", and after a son is born "Y's mother". This not

[2] Fieldwork conducted by Monica Das Gupta in North India between 1975-1990, and in China and the Republic of Korea in 1995-6 by Monica Das Gupta, Xie Zhenming, Li Bohua, and Bae hwa-Ok.
[3] Fieldwork conducted by Monica Das Gupta.

only reflects her lack of individual identity in her husband's village, but also reflects that her connection is not primarily to her husband but to his *patrilineage*.

Southern India is quite different, as many studies have pointed out. Women in South India can have considerable interaction with their parental family after marriage, and can function as independent social and legal entities in ways virtually unthinkable in the North. This is illustrated by the following condensed version of the life-history of a woman in a Karnataka village[4]:

> Lakshamma is the eldest of five sisters, they did not have a brother. When Lakshamma's parents died leaving three sisters still unmarried, she moved back to her parents' village with her husband. She sold some of her parents' land to pay for her sisters' marriages, and divided the rest between the sisters. When her second sister left her alcoholic husband and came back to her parents' village, she used some of her share of the property to set up a teashop near the village bus-stand. Her business flourished, and she was able to educate her children well.
> Significantly, these women's actions were not viewed as deviant by other villagers, including men. The village as a whole was supportive and respectful of them, and commended the eldest sister for her evenhanded division of the property.

Case-studies from China and South Korea[5]:

Interviews conducted in China and South Korea indicate that around the middle of this century, women had to contend with very similar patterns of familial relationship and structures of authority as those described above. This is illustrated by the following condensed accounts from field interviews.

(i) South Korean woman now in her seventies and living in the southern city of Taegu:

> "Although my first child was a son, my mother-in-law was very angry with me because the next three were daughters. I would cook rice for the family, but my daughters and I were allowed to eat only millet. Feeling very guilty about bearing three daughters in a row, I felt I should be very obedient to my mother-in-law. I would wake up very early and do all the housework, work on the rice fields, feed the animals, and then weave until late into the night. I served my mother-in-law carefully, making sure never to sleep until she was comfortably asleep and could not need anything further. After my second daughter was born, she sent me off to work in the kitchen and the rice fields within days of the birth, not allowing the normal period of rest. My third daughter died. Later I had another son, but by then my mother-in-law had died."

(ii) Woman aged almost 70 years, in the northern Chinese province of Hebei, still living in the village into which she was married:

> "My mother-in-law was a very harsh woman. My husband did not live at home, he worked elsewhere and visited home from time to time. I had to serve my

[4] Field interviews conducted by Monica Das Gupta, 1996.
[5] Source: field interviews conducted by Monica Das Gupta, Bae Hwa-Ok, and Xie Zhenming 1996.

mother-in-law hand and foot. In the morning I had to wake up and begin work before she woke up. I also had to empty her chamberpot in the morning. Then I worked all through the day, and could only go to sleep after she did...

My first child was a son, but she would not let me hold him. She insisted that I just lie him flat on the bed and leave him alone all day while I worked.

She would not let me eat rice, only inferior grains. Once at the Spring Festival my husband noticed that I did not get rice and asked her why this was so. She agreed to let me have some that day, but my husband couldn't help me much with my problems in the home.

When the Communist youth meetings began in the village, I attended a couple of them. They made me feel as though I had some group to which I belonged, outside my husband's household. But my mother-in-law forbade me from going to any more meetings, and I did not dare oppose her."

II Gender and development policies in China, 1950s-1990s

The Chinese state has for centuries tried to manipulate and adapt its people's lineage organization to serve its own ends. Patrilineal clan organization offers the state the possibility of reducing the costs of managing a large and farflung empire by passing on much of the burden of micro-administration to the family (Gates 1996; Fried 1969; Schurman 1968a and 1968b). This possibility has been formally exploited for centuries. For example, entire groups of families could be punished for one member's crime: a powerful incentive for people to keep their kinfolk compliant with state directives. At the same time, the state has always had to contend with the possibility that lineages could become large and powerful enough to challenge state authority (Faure 1989; Hu 1948), a consideration which has kept the state vigilant and in some ways antagonistic towards the lineage system.

This pattern has continued after the Revolution. On the one hand, the state had many reasons to want to reduce the power of the family and lineage. It wanted to collectivize property ownership and production, and to make people obedient to the state instead of their lineage superiors. This could not be achieved without smashing lineage political organization, as well as age and gender hierarchies within the household. To achieve these goals, the Communist Party launched a frontal attack on lineage organization and ancestor worship[6], and went far towards breaking age and gender hierarchies. The commune took over many traditional familial functions in economic and political life, and in providing some social services (Andors 1983: 53-73).

[6] These were Mao's dictums from 1927 onwards, and had been tried out in the areas of Communist rule before 1949, such as in the Jianxi soviet in the late 1920s and in Yan'an after the Long March. Such things are difficult to eradicate, however. Many people continued their practices quietly in their homes, for example by leaving out some food in the kitchen for the ancestors (Peng Xizhe, personal communication). As soon as the Communist control was loosened after the late 1970s, people went back to more public manifestations of their customs.

And yet, the Communist state could not bring itself to abandon the strengths of the family system for ensuring social stability, caring for the old and unemployed and raising new generations of useful citizens. It left untouched the system of exogamy and patrilocal residence, whereby a man stayed in his own village and obtained rights to live and work there by dint of birth, whereas a woman moved to her husband's family, losing her rights in her parents' village and looking after his parents instead of her own. As described below, even if the state had wanted to change these fundamental features of social organization, it would have encountered overwhelming popular opposition.

With a strong ideological commitment to gender equity, the Communist Party has used the power of a totalitarian state to transform gender relations. During the 1950s women were brought out of the home to be paid for their work, to participate in political meetings and exercise their newly-acquired legal right to choose their own husband. During the Cultural Revolution this process accelerated. Since 1979, the state has given up some degree of interventionism to encourage private enterprise, which has brought some reversals for women. At the same time, this period has also opened up new opportunities for the women's movement, as described below.

Education and Employment

Universal education was a priority for the Communist regime, equally for girls and boys, and impressive strides were made in providing basic education to people. Emphasis on this diminished with the advent of economic reforms. As a consequence, there is a growing gender gap in schooling, especially in rural areas (Honig and Hershatter 1988:36-37; Wolf 1985:124-6). There is also a gender gap in higher education. While production was collectively organized, women were also formally incorporated into the workforce in both agriculture and industry. Women gained both materially and psychologically from the replacement of family-based production by collective units. This radically altered the balance of power in the household. As wage earners, women commanded new respect and gained voice in family decision making. Their income was perceived to be essential for the family, and women were transformed from housewives to full participants in domestic and community life.

Since 1979, there has been a major change of direction as China shifted from collective production to a market economy. The work point system in the rural areas was given up and the family became the production unit once again under the "household responsibility" system. In urban areas, center-controlled job market and salary system was supplemented by private business under local administration's regulation. The subsequent economic reforms have improved living standards enormously, but have had a more mixed impact on gender equity. Especially in the vast agricultural sector, women's work is once again becoming invisible, which can potentially reduce their intra-household bargaining power.

The sexual division of labor has deepened, with men migrating to higher-paying jobs outside the agrarian sector and women remaining to take care of agricultural production. Women are also gaining employment in the mushrooming private sector in urban and

rural areas, but this involves mostly young unmarried women with poor working conditions and insecure jobs (Andors 1984:293; Gu 1997; Wolf 1985:59-61), supplementing their parents' income until they marry.

In urban areas, reform of state-owned enterprises has led to discriminatory practices against women. They are more likely to be laid off and less likely to be hired or promoted[7]. They are also more likely to be given lower-paid jobs. Foreign-invested firms in particular discriminate heavily against women as they are not subject to close scrutiny from the government on the working conditions and job security. For some women, the reduction of income has caused a marked drop in family and social status (Woo 1994: 280-8).

With increased pressures to be efficient, enterprises are decreasingly willing to make necessary concessions for women's reproductive roles. Women are perceived as less available than men to work overtime, and more likely to take time off for family emergencies. Government's efforts to protect women's welfare and to alleviate their double burden only serves to peripheralize them as workers, because employers find it expensive to provide benefits for maternity and child care. Consequently, women are disproportionately likely to be laid off their jobs: according to a 1987 poll of 660 enterprises, 64 percent of the surplus industrial workers were women (Lu 1988:19). Professional woman also suffer like their Western counterparts: those who takes a few years off to raise a child or two will rarely catch up with their male colleagues. Increasing numbers of women are becoming self-employed workers in small businesses, domestic labor or home-based production on contract from factories.

Efforts to protect women workers have been double-edged weapons. During the 1950s and early 1960s, women were given special consideration at work during menstruation, pregnancy, birth, and breast-feeding. The motive was both to protect women and also enable them to raise healthy children. During the Cultural Revolution, the emphasis changed to one in which women were no different from men (Woo 1994:279). After 1979, these forms of protection were reinstated[8]. However, they have been used to justify lower wages for women, and they also run the risk of reinforcing the stereotype that a woman's primary role is reproduction. Another gender gap is introduced by mandatory retirement for women 5 years earlier than for men. This does little for gender equity, but helps the state by freeing up middle-aged women to look after aging parents-in-law, grandchildren and the home while their daughters-in-law go out to work.

---

[7] This had happened only rarely in the preceding decades, in extreme circumstances such as in the early 1960s after the Famine, when female industrial workers were more likely to be laid off. Source: Danning Wang's field work in Tianjin between 1996 and 1997.

[8] The two regulations are the Provisional Regulations for Health Care for Women Employees, known as the 1986 Health Care Regulations, and the Regulations Governing Labor Protection for Female Staff Members and Workers, known as the 1988 Labor Protection Regulations. Both were the joint products of the Ministry of Public Health, the Ministry of Labor and Personnel, the All-China Federation of Trade Unions, and the All-China Women's Federations (Woo, 1994).

Women's Health

Communist China has consistently placed high priority on improving the people's health, and in this has greatly improved living standards. While the overall thrust has been on public health, many of the efforts have necessarily been specifically geared towards women. Without this, it was not possible to meet their goals of reducing child mortality and exposure to disease.[9] Health education was especially geared towards women, who were assumed responsible for household health and sanitation. Public education on reproductive health and hygiene was also included, on topics such as menstruation, pregnancy, sexual intercourse, and breast feeding, etc.(Evans 1997:146). This was also designed to help establish conjugal harmony, consistent with the 1950 Marriage Law (Evans 1997:2). A prenatal health care campaign was launched to modernize midwifery practices (Goldstein 1998:153), and this helped to radically reduce infant and maternal mortality.

Women's health also benefited from interventions driven by other agendas, notably population control. Viewed as a top national priority since the mid 1960s, the state made extensive use of its remarkable machinery of intervention to spread information about the need to reduce fertility, make contraceptive technology available, and ensure implementation of population control goals (Peng 1989). While this program has sometimes been harsh in implementation, it was accompanied by strenuous efforts to ensure good conditions for pregnancy, delivery, and child health, leading to rapid improvements in maternal and child health (Sidel and Sidel 1982).

Family law

From the outset, the Communist party has tried to give women equal legal rights as men, including in many aspects of family law. These laws constituted frontal attacks on the traditional family system. Predictably, crucial aspects of these reforms elicited strong popular resentment. While emphasizing social stability, the state would compromise the implementation of its new policies and laws when they threatened familial stability.

The Marriage Law of 1950 was truly radical. It sought to eliminate arranged marriages, brideprice, and child-marriage. Women were given the right to choose their own partners and demand a divorce, and rights to inherit property and control of their children. Female cadres attached to the Women's Federation were given the task of implementing these policies at the village and household level, with the active cooperation and support of other cadres.

The law met deep-seated and violent resistance from men as well as older women, both of whom stood to lose control over their young daughters and daughters-in-law (Andors 1984; Croll 1981; Davin 1995). It came to be known as the "divorce law", and resulted in an estimated 70,000 to 80,000 suicides and murders of women between 1950 and 1953 (Davin 1976: 87). Widespread peasant opposition to the implementation threatened social

---

sh and Whyte (1978:85-91); Sidel and Sidel (1982); Whyte and Parish (984:69-71).

and political instability. Moreover, the state had a strong interest in maintaining a stable family system because of its functional utility. Thus, although the Marriage Law was well-intentioned and its implementation had successfully reduced the incidence of arranged marriages and increased the domestic autonomy of young women, its implementation slacked off when it began to threaten the family system and to generate political disaffection (Andors 1983; Park 1990).

The other example was in the process of reducing domestic violence. Local cadres are expected to mediate in resolving disputes, reduce violence and raise consciousness of how women are oppressed within the household and more specific problems such as husbands spending too much on alcohol. This has given women much support in domestic matters and increased their self-confidence. However, cadres are much less likely to support women when lineage interests are threatened. For example, women received little support in claiming rights to land which deviate from customary norms.

A fundamental clash between the peasants' and the state's approach to regulating women's rights created problems in implementing the state's family laws. The 1950s and 1980s Marriage Laws sought to give women equal control over productive resources. A further attempt to give women equal rights of inheritance was made in the Inheritance Law which came into force in 1985 and prohibited gender discrimination in inheritance. However, rural customary laws continue to regulate women's right according to their marital status and residence. Moreover, the state has avoided directly indicating what share of property married-out daughters should inherit.

In reality, land is allocated on the basis of village residence, and residence continues with few exceptions to be determined patrilineally. When women marry their allotment is withdrawn, to make room for others such as in-coming daughters-in-laws. Thus there are many obstacles to women's claiming their rights, for example if her marriage does not work out (Das Gupta and Li 1999). Village cadres, themselves members of the village patrilineages, would be unlikely to support a woman against her husband and his male kin in opposing the separation of family property in the case of divorce. Although the 1980 New Marriage Law made it much easier for rural women to obtain a divorce and leave difficult marriage, women still face obstacles of financial viability and social stigma in the villages.

Men's rights are further strengthened by a provision for an extra share of the inheritance for those who look after the parents. This reinforces another key aspect of women's marginalization, namely that sons customarily provide old age support. The 1950 Marriage Law sought to change this by implying that both sons and daughters have the duty to support their parents. In reality, however, many practices reinforced traditional norms of old age support. For example, when parents had no work unit to reimburse their medical expenses, the oldest son's work unit would generally contribute as it was perceived to be his responsibility. In rural China, parents continue to live with their sons, and it is still rare for married women to contribute to this[10].

[10] The stituation is quite different in urban areas, where it has become normal for married daughters to help their parents financially and physically

The New Marriage Law passed in 1980 reinforced this social custom by requiring children to assume responsibility for their aged parents. Women are once again encouraged to be good daughters-in-law. This has given a new dimension to the age-old conflict between mothers- and daughters-in-law (Honig and Hershatter 1988: 168-69). In the face of a rapidly aging population, the state encourages stable familial support for the aged and is unlikely to alter course on this issue.

Social engineering through Mass Communication

In China, the media and publishing industry are under the strict control of the Communist Party and the state, and all channels of communication have been actively used to promote their policies on women. During the 1950s and 1960s, when the socialist state was being constructed, there was a strong thrust towards emancipating women. All means of communication were mobilized to this end, with remarkable success in demolishing many of the bases of women's oppression. To spread awareness of the new Marriage Law and reduce cultural resistance to its implementation, extensive use was made of the story of a young girl (Xiao Qin) who fought her mother, the match-maker and other villagers in order to marry her lover.

Massive propaganda efforts used female role models to alter the view that women were intellectually and otherwise inferior to men, and to encourage people to think of women as having the same rights and duties as men. Significantly, these role models were workers or peasants: a major departure from the pre-Revolutionary days when gender equity was the domain of the educated urban elites. In the 1950s, a few outstanding urban workers received much public attention and later went on to be elected as political leaders. The same was true of what came to be known as "Iron Girls Teams": groups of young women who took on the most difficult and demanding tasks at work to show that they could be as strong as men. This received enormous publicity and quickly became a standard fixture in every factory and collective farm.

The Cultural Revolution brought a new twist to this effort by conveying the message that real heroines are totally committed to the revolution and disinterested in being wives and mothers. Young women were portrayed dressed in male army uniform looking ready to beat Mao's enemies to death. This role model was emulated by the millions of girls who joined the Red Guards and violently challenged many forms of authority, including their teachers and their parents. Under the patronage of Madame Mao, dramas were popularized in which women were shown struggling alone (and successfully) in combating the conservative men around them[11].

[11] Honig and Hershatter (1988). For example, Fang Haizhen in the *Shanghai Harbor*, with a sharp intellect and better knowledge of industry, is a more qualified leader than her male colleagues. In the *Ode to the Dragon River*, Jiang Shuiying had an insight into society and human nature, and her broad mind humbles all the men around her. Ke Xiang in the *Red Azalea Mountain* was a legendary heroine who went to a group of outlaws and single-handedly transformed them into Red Army soldiers.

The new complexities of women's lives in the new market economy of China are mirrored in how women are portrayed in literature, newspapers and journals, television programs, commercial advertisements, movies and soap operas. These sometimes portray women as housewives and sex objects and introduce female stereotypes adept at manipulating men for financial gain, despite a law against using sexually charged images of women in advertisements (Bu 1998; Zhao 1997). Counterbalancing this are portraits of successful career women successful career women awkward with the roles the family prescribes to them (Rofel 1994).

Women's organizations

The first tide of the modern women's liberation movement in China emerged after Britain invaded China in the Opium War of 1840. This national crisis triggered a serious examination of how to strengthen the society and polity. The Constitutional Reform and Modernization Movement advocated reforms to improve women's lives, such as educating women and discouraging polygyny and foot-binding. This movement failed (Lu and Zhen, 1990), but gender issues were re-opened in 1919 as part of a broader movement for political reform. The agenda was broadened to include women's right to choose their husband, their right to be sexually active before marriage and after widowhood, rights of inheritance, women's education and work, prostitution, and foot-binding (Li and Zhang, 1994).

These efforts at social reform were interrupted by the political and administrative chaos generated by internal wars between warlords and between the Communists and the Kuomintang, as well as by the Japanese invasion during the Second World War. In the regions controlled by the Communists, efforts were initiated to break age and gender hierarchies along the lines developed further after 1949. With the establishment of Communist control over the entire country, these efforts were spread across China, as described above.

The economic reforms carried out since the late 1970s brought an end to the era of intense pro-active support by the state of women's liberation. The state continues to be active, through organizations such as the Women's Federation. However, more independent women's organizations have also come up under the leadership of educated women[12], which maintain a working relationship with the Women's Federations areas (Li and Zhang, 1994). Both the Women's Federation and women's NGOs advocate women's independence gained through means such as education and skill training programs. They are concerned with minimizing the negative implications for women of the market economy: including job insecurity, growing gender gaps in schooling in rural areas, the return of prostitution, and the misuse of women's images in advertisements. Thus women's movements in China today are returning to the forms of women's movement common in other countries and prevalent in China before the Revolution.

[12] The term non-governmental is used to describe any institute or organization not set within the official network according to the will of party authorities. This kind of organization was allowed to exist legally only after the late 1970s.

III Gender and development policies in the Republic of Korea, 1950s-1990s

The Republic of Korea's rapid economic growth over the past four decades has been acclaimed as one of the success stories in the world's development efforts. The initial industrialization process began during the Japanese colonial occupation (1910-1945), creating a modern infrastructure in the areas of finance, production, transportation, and commerce. However, a good part of the heavy industry and development of railway communication was concentrated in the region which subsequently became North Korea, as it was adjacent to the rich coal and iron reserves of Manchuria. Radical land reform was carried out, starting in 1947 during the American occupation and completed after the Korean War. This enhanced the process of breaking traditional Korean power structures to create an egalitarian society, which was a crucial basis for subsequent development (Koo 1987; M.Lee 1982).

Then came the Korean War with a devastating toll on the country. After the war, successive governments had a strong commitment to rebuild the war-torn country into a prosperous industrial country. During 1960-1995, the economy grew at an average annual rate of 9 percent. In the late 1950s, the country's GNP per capita was less than $100, and over 40% of the population suffered from absolute poverty. By 1995, it had become the world's fifteenth largest economy, with a per capita GNP of over $10,000 (UNDP 1998). This stunning pace of development has included rapid improvements in people's levels of education, health, and living standards. Poor in land and natural resources, the government concentrated on building a skilled and healthy workforce to lay the basis for rapid industrialization.

This emphasis on human development and economic growth has dramatically transformed the living conditions of women as well as men. However, women's position in the family and society has been slow to change. The land reform redistributed land to male heads of household, and had little implication for gender equity. State policy has made considerable effort to protect Korean culture in the face of rapid industrialization and urbanization. Patrilineal social organization and segregated gender roles are perceived to be central to Korean culture, and consequently state policy has sought to preserve them. The social, economic, and political participation of Korean women are still among the lowest in the world (KIHASA and UNDP 1998).

Education and Employment

Traditional education in Korea was based on the Confucian Classics, and was confined to males, mostly the sons of the aristocratic, *yangban* class. From the 1880s, modern education for girls and boys was introduced by Christian missionaries, and many schools also began to be established by Korean intellectuals. The Japanese colonial government organized a modern educational system and put great emphasis on primary schooling of both girls and boys with a political as well as economic agenda: that is, to convert young Koreans into loyal subjects and skilled laborers (Mason et al. 1980). In the case of girls, the objective was to train girls to be "good wives and wise mothers". When Korea

became independent in 1945, the enrollment rate at the primary level was about 45% (McGinn et al.1980).

Much destruction took place during the Korean War, but immediately after the war the government concentrated on primary education, with the explicit objectives not only of increasing people's skills but also of inculcating anti-Communist thought and "moral education". Thus once again a combination of political and economic agendas helped give education strong state backing. Primary schooling became universal by the mid-1960s, but a substantial gender gap in educational attainment persisted at the higher levels. The gap in middle and high school enrollment rates began to narrow only in the 1970s and did not close completely until 1980 and 1995 respectively. Although there is still a wide gender gap in enrollment in higher education, women's enrollment has risen sharply in recent decades, from below 9% in 1980 to 45% in 1996.

Women's participation in the labor force has risen substantially in recent years. However, women in most occupations face gender discrimination, including in hiring practices, wage differentials, limited opportunities for long-term employment, and male-oriented culture of the workplace. In any given occupational category, women tend to have the positions with the lowest pay and status. Given their relatively poor prospects in the job market, one major incentive for women to enroll in higher education is to increase their chances of marrying men with higher incomes[13]. This is also reflected in parents' responses to the question of why they want to educate their children. In the case of sons they emphasize "good job" while for daughters they stress "marriage and connections" (National Statistical Office 1996). The Equal Employment Act of 1987 has made explicit discrimination against married women illegal, but strong cultural norms regarding women's proper role as wife and mother continue to prevail and many employers and employees alike expect that female staff will leave their jobs when they marry.

Women's Health

The government's development strategy has included a heavy emphasis on improving levels of health and reducing fertility[14]. Extensive efforts in preventive health services combined with improvements in nutrition and living conditions to bring about a rapid decline in mortality (UNDP 1998). Part of this effort was carried out under the nationwide 'New Community Movement' (*Saemaul Undong*), organized by the government for rural development[15]. The success of these efforts was very impressive: the average life expectancy at birth for women increased from 53.7 years in 1960 to 77.4 years in 1995, and that for men increased from 51.1 to 69.5 years (KIHASA and UNDP 1998).

From 1962, a nationwide blitzkrieg was launched to reduce population growth, overcoming concerns that contraception might subvert traditional culture and sexual morality (Kim et al. 1972). In conjunction with improving health conditions and better

[13] K.Kim (1990); S.Lee (1997), M. Park (1991).
[14] Whang (1986); KIHASA and UNDP (1998); S.Kim (1998).
and UNDP (1998); Y. Kim (1980).

conditions of delivery, this enabled women's reproductive health to improve rapidly, and also contributed towards a rapid reduction in child mortality (KIHASA and UNDP 1998).

The state's commitment to family planning had some other indirect beneficial fallouts for women. Firstly, it provided an acceptable forum for women to coalesce into some formal organization. During the 1950s, some women's organizations had already formed around this issue (Kim et al. 1972). During the 1960s and 1970s, this process received state backing, as the state encouraged the formation of Mothers' Clubs nationwide at the grassroots level to disseminate contraceptive information and supplies.

Another indirect positive fallout for women from the family planning program came in the mid-1970s, when it was perceived that in order to maintain the pace of fertility decline it was necessary to try to reduce the strong cultural preference for sons. This made the government more receptive to women's organizations' demand for changing the Family Law to reduce the hold of patrilineal social structure (E.Kim 1991). Since the late 1980s, the government's receptiveness to these demands received a further major boost from strong concerns that the high sex ratios at birth will lead to a shortage of future wives (KIHASA and UNDP 1998).

Family law

In principle, the legal rights of Korean women were assured by the 1948 Constitution, which stated that all citizens are equal before the law. This was a great improvement over the previous situation in which, without their husbands' approval, women were legally debarred from credit or property transactions, mediating disputes, initiating lawsuits or making donations (J.Kim 1993). In practice, however, there has been very slow change in women's legal rights during this century.

The customary family law, which severely restricts women's legal rights, was given legal backing by being formalized in the Civil Code of 1962. It improved some aspects of women's lives, in that the possibility of formal adoption was extended also to girls; women were allowed to inherit what the family head might want to give them; and male and female adultery were treated equally as grounds for divorce. However, the key changes required for gender equality were ignored. Under pressure to avoid the demographic fallout of strong son preference as well as the efforts of women's organizations, the government substantially revised the Family Law in 1990. Yet even today it contains some key provisions effective in curtailing women's autonomy.

As the Family Law has been so central to the fight for women's rights in the Republic of Korea, it needs to be described at some length. The family registration system (*hojuk*) was the way in which clans and their component families kept records of their membership, and of births, deaths and marriages of family members. On this basis, people are incorporated into or excluded from family membership, and allocated rights of inheritance as well as duties of ancestor worship. For example, the eldest brother would customarily receive a larger share of family property, and with it the duty of looking after his parents and ancestors.

Women move from one clan to another on marriage, and this too was formally recorded by having her name transferred from her family registry of birth to that of her family of marriage. The children born in a marriage are entered in the father's family registry. Thus a woman's social and legal identity is derived from her relationship to the male head of the family, even if this is her grandson. In the event of divorce, a woman had little chance of obtaining child custody, alimony or a share of joint marital property unless the husband consented to it. This gave women strong incentives to avoid divorce at all costs.

Formalized into the Family Law, these customary rules formed the legal basis for the definition of family headship, relatives, marriage, divorce, inheritance, property, and so on. The Family Law was mildly amended in 1977, and more substantially in 1990 after decades of effort by women's organizations. The key changes made in 1990 are as follows (KIHASA and UNDP 1998; E.Kim 1991):

- Men continue to be heads of household, but the eldest son has the choice of relinquishing the duties of supporting his parents, ancestors and unmarried siblings.

This may sound like a meager victory for women, but in fact it holds significant potential for altering the family system. Caring for parents and ancestors is central to maintaining the continuity of the patrilineage, and reduced emphasis on this is a crucial step towards removing the cultural basis for women's social marginalization.

- Relatives were earlier defined to extend to the husband's third cousins and the wife's first cousins. Under the revised law, they extend also to the third cousins of the wife.

When an American feminist colleague heard of this, she exclaimed *"What's the point of that?"* Yet in the context of Korean culture, it signifies an expansion of the social recognition given to women.

- Women's right to inherit parental property is expanded. *In the absence of a will*, the property is to be distributed evenly among the children regardless of sex.

Clearly it is still easy for parents to contravene this law by making a will. However, parents may be less reluctant than in the past to allow their daughters some inheritance rights, because the population is now overwhelmingly urban. The real sticking point on women's property rights hinges around inheriting *land*, which is completely incompatible with customary norms of exogamy and patrilocal residence. In urban areas, it is possible to have more egalitarian inheritance without threatening the very fabric of social organization. Thus there is, in principle, scope for the new laws to be implemented with little of the mayhem encountered in China and Northern India, described below.

- Women's rights to inherit her deceased husband's property have also been expanded. Under the revised law, both widowers and widows will inherit jointly with their children; and if there are no children, each of them will become a co-heir with the spouse's lineal ascendants.

This has another important implication: if a woman dies without children, her *parents* can be co-heirs to her property along with her husband. Although such circumstances are unlikely to be common, this is a highly significant departure from the traditional family system. The principle has been established that a woman's parents have some claims over a daughter even after her marriage, which may help increase the value of daughters relative to sons.

- Both husband and wife have equal rights to any property acquired during marriage, and are entitled to claim for its division upon divorce.

This is obviously a major improvement in the position of Korean women, who otherwise had little choice to exit difficult or abusive marriages.

- Child custody is no longer granted automatically to the father. It is now determined by mutual agreement of the couple or failing that by the family court.
- Marriage continues to be prohibited between people of the same clan. Thus patrilineages continue to be required to be exogamous.

The first and the last provisions above continue to be key concerns for women's organizations, as they are central to the continuation of patrilineal social organization and consequently women's social marginalization. The insistence on male headship in particular is perceived as the principal source of gender inequality in the family and in the workings of other social institutions.

Social engineering through Mass Communication

As in the case of education and employment, the state encouraged women's emancipation to the extent that it helped meet national development objectives, while making sure that the emancipation did not go further than strictly required. Thus women were encouraged to play an active role in the national drive for community development (*Saemaul Undong*) during the 1970s, and also participate in the decision-making processes in the village general assembly. This was a radical departure from custom:

> In Korea's past...women were treated rather as limited personalities and prohibited from participating in any public or social activities. Even within the family major decisions were beyond the scope of women's involvement (Whang 1981:103).

It was noted that women were much more enthusiastic than men about striving to improve their living conditions and family income. They participated actively in programs for savings, non-formal education and agricultural extension, as well as family planning, environmental improvement and income-generation. The Saemaul Women's Associations also organized communal kitchens during the busy farming seasons, operated daycare centers and used extra funds in ad hoc ways such as contributing to building piped water systems and public baths (Whang 1981:108-9).

Until the mid-1980s, the Korean mass media was under the strict supervision of the government, which had limited interest in women's emancipation. The popular dramas in the 60s usually portrayed women as virtuously and resolutely enduring domestic problems. For instance, one popular drama focused on a woman who was being treated very badly by her mother-in-law while also making sacrifices for her son's success. Another program depicted a woman who was making sacrifices for the husband all through her life, and embracing her husband's family members despite the terrible ordeals they caused.

As the Korean economy developed through the 70s and 80s, career women have increasingly come to be represented in TV dramas. However, they are generally portrayed in "acceptable" female occupations, and their primary concerns still revolve around men and marriage. Career women are portrayed approvingly only if they also succeed in fulfilling their traditional familial roles well and can keep their husbands happy. In recent dramas, another theme is that of women's careers as a source of marital

conflict, with images of career women creating family problems while men are shown as reliable family heads. This is especially surprising given that most of these family dramas are written by female writers (K.Lee 1989).

A hopeful trend in recent dramas has been a rise of support given to women's pursuit of their careers by their parents, parents-in-laws, and husbands: for example, by raising the subject of how a woman should not waste her education by withdrawing from the labor force after marriage. These reflect some changing attitudes within the country, as shown in surveys (KIHASA and UNDP 1998). Yet this is accompanied by only limited efforts to encourage men to share domestic duties, which is still perceived as demeaning to men and greatly disapproved by parents-in-law.

Recently, there has been more open discussion of some critical gender issues, such as rape, domestic violence and sexual harassment in the workplace. This helps give some legitimacy to women's growing concerns about their lives and increased awareness of gender equity issues amongst the audience (K. Lee 1989).

While fictional dramas in TV have increasingly been dealing with changing roles of women in Korean society—albeit in a limited way--other TV programs such as news or entertainment programs have maintained a more traditional orientation. For instance, female anchor positions on news programs are confined to good-looking single women, who mostly leave their position when they get married while their male counterparts continue for decades. These highly visible forms of gender differentiation further reinforce the already prevalent views of women's limited roles in public life. In sum, although portrayals of Korean women in TV programs have gone through some changes over the years, they still appear to reinforce conventional stereotypes of women's social position.

Women's Organizations

A number of women's organizations were established in Korea during the period of Japanese colonial occupation, mostly as part of a wider political movement for independence, but also with an agenda for women's welfare (Y.Kim 1986). Some socialist women's organizations also sprang up, advocating gender equality more strongly. Since the 1950s, a variety of women's organizations have been formed. Some have been directly concerned with immediate issues of equal pay or legal concerns, others have focused more on political changes and human rights reforms, while still others engage in voluntary community activities (Palley 1994).

The average number of women representatives in past legislatures in Korea has been at most 2%, and currently women hold only 1.5% of all high-level government positions (KIHASA and UNDP 1998). Given this minimal political representation, women's organizations have been a primary channel for bringing women's concerns to the attention of policy makers. However, their effectiveness has depended heavily on the extent to which their roles have meshed with the priorities of the state. For instance, the Mothers' Clubs received strong state support and were highly effective during the 60s

and 70s when they were important for the national programs for family planning and community development, but they have dwindled in significance since then. Women's labor organizations met with little success in their efforts since the mid-70s to improve women's working conditions. Only recently have their efforts even begun to bear fruit. The slow progress in changing Korea's family law also illustrates how little weight is given to women's concerns.

The 1970s and 1980s brought international efforts to improve the status of women across the world. This encouraged women's organizations to push for further reforms in the family law. On its part, the government also became more proactive. It established a Special Advisory Commission on Women in 1983, and in 1986 it added a plan for women's development to the Sixth Social and Economic Development Plans. At the same time, organizations such as the Korean League of Women Voters began to lobby political candidates to vote for a family law reform and exhorted women not to vote for candidates who did not support this (E.Kim 1991). All these efforts combined with economic and demographic exigencies to bring about the 1990 revision of the Family Law, which for all its limitations represents a significant break from the past.

IV Gender and development policies in India, 1950s-1990s

From the early days of colonial contact, the British and the Indians developed an active exchange of ideas. Beginning around 1800, there were a series of movements to reform aspects of social custom and religious beliefs that were perceived as impinging on human welfare and dignity. These included movements against some of the injustices perpetrated on women and later also against the caste system (Heimsath 1964; Nair 1996). A series of efforts have been made since then by the Indian political and social leadership to improve women's position in society, including demanding female suffrage at about the same time as it was granted in Britain (Forbes 1996).

The circumstances leading up to independence played an important role in shaping the state's policy imperatives, including those concerned with women's empowerment. The independence movement included a serious interest in integrating women into mainstream public life. At the same time, the independence movement sought to create a democratic and secular polity, and was successful in achieving this goal. This has constrained efforts to empower women, as the political leadership has had to keep an eye on the demands of different constituencies, especially those of religious groups seeking to maintain their identity in the secular society.

India's achievements in gender equity are quite mixed. On the one hand, considerable effort has been made to use legislation and social engineering to bring women into the mainstream of society. Women's own efforts to mobilize to improve their lives have mostly received official encouragement, albeit sometimes not as actively as could be wished. As a result, women have come a very long way in India from the position they were in early in this century. Yet the pace of change has often been painfully slow, especially in the spheres of health, education and poverty reduction. This has profoundly

affected its ability to improve women's living conditions and to implement the laws and policies for ensuring women's autonomy.

Education and Employment

The agenda for social reform in India stressed the importance of women's education as a way of improving their status. Christian missionaries began the process in the early nineteenth century, and it was soon taken up by the social reform movements and Hindu religious reform movements, and by the colonial government (Forbes 1996). The Indian Constitution stipulated in 1949 the goal of providing free and compulsory education for all children up to age 14, and to achieve this on a universal basis within 10 years. Yet progress has been very slow: only 39% of females aged 7+ were literate (Basu 1999).

The real indictment of India's education policy is that it has used budgetary allocations to develop subsidized institutions of higher learning for the children of the elites, neglecting primary education for the majority of people. Gaps in educational attainment by income level and by rural-urban residence are high, and the most neglected are people living in the rural areas of Northern India (PROBE Report). Gender gaps in education are also significant, and are larger the lower the overall educational attainment of a group (Filmer and Pritchett forthcoming). There are small signs of improvement here: of all children enrolled in school, girls constituted 28% in 1951 and this had risen to 42% by 1991. A similar picture emerges of women's employment. The most serious problem is not a gender gap, but the lack of growth of employment opportunities.

The legal system offers several kinds of protection to women workers. The Constitution guarantees women's rights to equal opportunity in employment. It also seeks to protect women workers by discouraging their employment in dangerous occupations and industries, and the provision of maternity benefits and crèches for children. In practice, these attempts have had limitations. They are inadequately implemented, and in any case apply only to formal sector employment that accounts for a small fraction of total employment. Moreover, they serve to make it less attractive for employers to hire women in the industrial workforce.

Women's Health

The health transition in India has been hampered by much the same factors as the education transition: the elites have diverted resources to provide for the expensive tertiary-level facilities that serve their own needs. The needs of rural areas and of the urban poor are consequently neglected except in a few states committed to overall social development. This neglect combines with poverty and malnutrition and illiteracy to produce a slow pace of improvements in health (Shiva, Goyal and Krishnan 1992).

Women and children have borne much of the brunt of poor health conditions, because of poor conditions of childbearing. Malnutrition results in women entering their childbearing years in poor physical condition, and suffering further depletion with each birth. Infants suffer from low birthweight, poor care at delivery and poor health support

during their early vulnerable years. Some regions have especially high levels of child mortality, which results in their mothers suffering through even more pregnancies in order to reach desired family size (L.Visaria 1999).

Family planning received much more serious attention than health. A major crop failure during the mid-1960s alerted the government to the urgent need to raise food production and simultaneously reduce the number of mouths to feed. Both objectives were embarked on with much seriousness of purpose, creative organization, and considerable success. The family planning program has done a great deal to improve maternal health, though its primary goal was population control.

Family law

India's cultural diversity is mirrored in enormous heterogeneity in family systems, which greatly complicates efforts to modify family law. Northwest India is characterized by rigidly patrilineal rules of residence and inheritance, as described above. Most of the rest of Northern India has similar norms but in somewhat modified form, since people are not organized into territorially-based clans. In contrast, parts of South and Eastern India had matrilineal systems of descent and inheritance, while in yet others children of both sexes inherit from both parents.

Colonial policies were highly supportive of the more patrilineal systems and effectively dismantled the matrilineal systems, particularly in the Southwest (Nair 1996; Saradamoni 1996). By and large, the British sought to interfere little in the operation of local customs (Kosambi 1996), but the exigencies of revenue-collection required codifying systems of land-ownership and inheritance into tidy administration-friendly forms (Smith 1996). This process of formalizing systems inevitably meant reducing the diversity of family forms and their potential mutability[16].

For maximizing revenues with minimum management, it was difficult to beat the cost-effectiveness of the Northwest Indian system, where peasant owner-cultivators had high incentives to invest in increasing production, and were organized into units which could be mobilized to ensure that revenues were paid. This was what the Chinese state had also discovered. This system received much administrative support, and Northwest India became the source of massive food exports to the rest of India and the world, but this support reinforced the kinship system which marginalized women.

At the time of Independence, there was quite serious political commitment to gender equity in the nationalist leadership. Before independence, a subcommittee of the National Planning Committee of the Congress Party was appointed to consider how to "remove all obstacles and handicaps in realizing an equal status and opportunity for women" (National Planning Committee 1947). Among its recommendations was the demand for a civil code applicable to all citizens, under which women would have equal rights of inheritance and equality with men in respect of marriage and divorce laws.

[16] See papers in Sangari and Vaid 1989 and Uberoi 1996.

However, as became clear over time, there were serious political obstacles to reforming family law and enforcing constitutionally guaranteed rights to equality before the law. One obstacle was the principle of *federalism*, under which states have the power to legislate on many issues, including health, education, social welfare and agricultural land: the latter being a particularly critical issue in overwhelmingly agrarian India. As a result, women continue to have little control over land, particularly in the Northern states (Agarwal 1994). Another critical obstacle was the principle of *religious freedom*, whereby family or "personal" law was different according to individual religious affiliation: Hindu, Muslim, Christian and Parsi

Since Hindus could not claim protection as a religious minority, the state exercised greater initiative in amending Hindu family laws to improve gender equity despite vociferous opposition (Parashar 1992). A series of radical laws comprising the Hindu Personal Law Code were passed in 1955 and 1956: banning bigamy; facilitating divorce; countering child marriage. Widows were given full rights to their husbands' property, where previously they had rights only to maintenance for life. Girls and boys were to inherit equally, and from both their father as well as their mother. However, all this applies *only if there is no will*, so in practice people are free to implement their own cultural norms with regard to children's inheritance (Agarwal 1994; Sarkar 1999). In Northwest India, there have been cases in which brothers have murdered a sister who has dared lay claim to their father's land.

Notwithstanding resistance, legislation has sought consistently to enter the private domestic sphere to protect women from various abuses. During the colonial period, Hindu social reformers and colonial administrators combined to pass a series of laws, including laws banning widow-immolation (1829), enabling Hindu widows to remarry (1856), banning female infanticide (1870) and against child marriage (1891, 1929). These efforts continued after independence. Alarmed by a rise in dowry pressures, a law in 1961 sought to ban dowry. Despite this, the problem of dowries and associated violence has continued to grow, and new laws were passed in the mid-1980s facilitating prosecution of people for receiving dowry and for dowry-related violence against women. Also in 1983, stronger penalties for rape were put in place, and the onus of proof shifted from the victim to the accused man.

Social engineering through Mass Communication

The Indian government has developed a range of mass communication channels, and has actively used them as an instrument to further its development policies and programs[17]. Radio alone is estimated to reach 93% of the population in the early 1990s (Planning Commission 1992). Television has sought to be brought to a wide audience through community television sets, further enhanced in the 1980s with satellite broadcasting. By the early 1990s, television reached an estimated 54% of the population.

[17] The central coordinating authority is the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, which is responsible for programming entertainment as well as for disseminating development-oriented messages.

The state has enormous capacity to organize communication campaigns, using a variety of highly creative methods. Entertainment "serials" and "soaps" are designed to carry an explicit "social" or developmental message, as well as to entertain. Given the perceived need for reducing the rate of population growth, an especially enterprising program was designed to spread the family planning message. This was done through television, radio, print, ubiquitous billboards and advertisements, street theatre, community-level organizations of women (*Mahila Mandals*) and many other means, including elephants walking through streets with the family planning message on their sides.

Efforts to increase gender equity in norms and values have been built into many levels of communication. One example is a lively radio drama about a childless woman, in which messages are woven in through folk songs to point out that childlessness is more often caused by male than female sterility, and mocking mothers-in-law who refuse to believe their precious son can be deficient in any way. Popular soap operas portray women who interact confidently and effectively in the public domain. Sensitive to the power and outreach of public and private television, an increasingly vigilant network of critics has been engaged in monitoring and critiquing the electronic media in its portrayal of women.

Since the early 1990s, with the advent of foreign-based satellite TV and local cable networks which could provide mass entertainment without the handicap of weaving in social and educative messages, the state has been forced to adopt more commercial criteria in its programming to avoid losing its audience altogether. As a result, there is less emphasis on messages to improve gender equity, both in the programs as well as in their accompanying advertisements.

The Indian film industry consists largely of movies created for mass entertainment, in which "good women" are typically portrayed in roles of chaste self-sacrificing wives and obedient daughters-in-law. Scenes portraying violence against women are also common in these films. Feminists and media advocacy groups have been active in protesting against this, though not all are agreed that stricter censorship is the answer.

Women's organizations

Through the nineteenth century, women's causes were championed mostly by male social reformers, some of whom also founded women's organizations. In the early twentieth century some influential women's organizations were set up by upper class women, which became active in mobilizing opinion for reform of various kinds, including demanding universal female suffrage. From the 1930s, people were increasingly swept up in the independence movement, in which women of all classes were centrally involved. At the time of Independence, women's organizations actively lobbied for reforms, and as described above were successful in obtaining a strong official commitment to gender equality.

The women's movement also received a boost from the international interest in the UN Decade for Women. The government was active in this endeavor, setting up a very competent Committee on the Status of Women in India to assess the effects of

government policy with reference to women's legal status, educational levels, economic roles, health and family planning, and to make policy recommendations in these regards. The ensuing report (Government of India 1974) was very thorough, and helped set the agenda both for a more interventionist approach by the government and for political activism by women's organizations.

As a result of combined efforts of women's groups, a series of laws or legal amendments were passed during the 1980s as described above, on issues such as rape and dowry violence (Gandhi and Shah 1992; Kumar 1993). In line with the recommendations of the Committee on the Status of Women in India, a Commission was set up in 1987 to review the working conditions of women in the informal sector. Its task was to recommend measures to improve labor legislation and to ensure women greater access to credit facilities[18]. However, with the increased market orientation of the economy in the 1990s, these concerns are receiving less attention.

IV Conclusions

At the beginning of this century, the educated elites in all three countries were preoccupied with similar concerns arising largely out of contact with the outside world. They all felt the threat of modern military power: much of India was a British colony; China was increasingly controlled by European powers and by Japan; and Korea was under Japanese colonial occupation. The elites in these countries felt that their societies urgently needed to "modernize" to enable them to assert their identity and engage on more equal terms with the outside world.

Information on how to modernize was collected through firsthand exposure as well as contact with the Christian missionaries who were active in all three countries, especially in setting up schools and health clinics. Through these sources, the local elites became conscious that improving women's welfare was a key element of "modernization". Some of the worst iniquities perpetrated on women were targeted for change, and the principle of educating girls was accepted.

Around 1950, all three countries had new beginnings with new regimes in power. Their attention focussed on how to transform their poor agrarian societies into modern industrialized economies. By the 1960s, they perceived that this required urgent efforts to reduce population growth. They launched intensive and successful family planning programs, which have frequently been insensitively implemented but nevertheless substantially improved women's reproductive health and helped closed the gender gap in adult survival (Figures 2 and 3).

Here the broad similarities end. Shaped by the circumstances of their birth, these three nation-states took quite different paths of economic and social development. The Chinese Communist Party was deeply committed to equity, including gender equity. The Republic of Korea's government opted for the path of export-oriented industrialization to achieve

[18] National Commission on Self-Employed Women and Women in the Informal Sector, 1988.

rapid economic growth, while preserving its culture and family system with all its implications for gender inequity. India became a democracy in which the influence of social movements for gender equity remained strong, but where the process of setting and implementing development agendas was constrained by the need to balance the competing political demands of an enormously heterogeneous people.

It is well known that these different paths have profoundly affected development outcomes in these countries, but they have also had tremendous impact on gender outcomes. China has succeeded not only in improving living standards but has also gone far towards establishing gender equity. The Republic of Korea has transformed living standards, but women's subordination has been slow to change. India has achieved considerable improvement in gender equity as compared with the past, but the results are still uneven and the gaps still substantial, while both women and men continue to struggle with poverty, illiteracy and poor health conditions.

Several lessons emerge from the experience of these three countries. One is that even when states are interested in promoting gender equity, their actions are often constrained by the desire to maintain stable family structures: in order to maintain social stability; support of the old, unemployed and disabled; and raising good citizens for the future. Another lesson is that in these rigidly patrilineal settings, it is very difficult for the state to make peasant rules of residence and landownership more gender-equitable. This complex system of roles and rights forms part of the moral order of the society, and efforts to alter it are perceived as deeply invasive. Transition out of an agrarian economy loosens up these constraints to gender equity. In urban settings, it is also much easier for women to demand their rightful inheritance in urban areas, where legal resources are close at hand: in contrast to rural areas where such amenities are more distant and instead the woman is surrounded by entire male sublineages hostile to her intent. A third lesson is that the most successful attempts to change gender roles are those in which policies work synergistically to make greater opportunities available to women, while simultaneously reducing the normative constraints on women's ability to avail of these opportunities. As the contrasting experiences of these three countries show, state policies profoundly shape gender relations such that very different gender outcomes have emerged from initially similar conditions of female social marginalization.

References

Agarwal, Bina. 1994. *A field of one's own: Gender and land rights in South Asia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Andors, Phyllis. 1983. *The unfinished liberation of Chinese women,1949-1980.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press; Brighton, Sussex: Wheatsheaf Books.

Andors, Phyllis. 1984. Women liberation in China: a continuing struggle, *China Notes* 23 (2-3): 287-293.

Basu, Aparna. 1999. Women's education in India: achievements and challenges, in Bharati Ray and Aparna Basu eds. *From Independence towards freedom: Indian women since 1947*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp.135-57.

Bu, Wei. 1998. Gender and Media: Policy and Current Situation, *Women Studies* 1: 15-20.

Croll, Elisabeth. 1981. *The Politics of Marriage in Contemporary China*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Das Gupta, Monica. 1995. Life Course Perspectives on Women's Autonomy and Health Outcomes, *American Anthropologist* 97(3):481-491.

Das Gupta, Monica, Jiang Zhenghua, Xie Zhenming, Li Bohua, Nam-Hoon Cho, Woojin Chung, and P.N.Mari Bhat. 1997. Gender Bias in China, South Korea and India: causes and policy implications, *Harvard University Center for Population and Development Studies Working Paper 98.03*.

Das Gupta, Monica and P.N.Mari Bhat. 1997. Fertility Decline and Increased Manifestation of Sex Bias in India, Population Studies, *Population Studies* 51(3): 307-315.

Das Gupta, Monica and Li Shuzhuo. 1999. Gender bias and the marriage squeeze in China, South Korea and India 1920-1990: the effects of war, famine and fertility decline, *Development and Change* 30(3), Special Issue on *Gendered Poverty and Wellbeing* (ed. Shahra Razavi), in press.

Davin, Delia. 1976. *Womenwork: Women and the Party in Revolutionary China*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Davin, Delia. 1995. Women, Work and Property in the Chinese Peasant Household of the 1980s, in Diane Elson (ed.) *Male bias in the development process*, Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press pp.29-50.

Evans, Harriet. 1997. *Women and Sexuality in China: Female Sexuality and Gender Since 1949,* New York: Continuum.

Faure, David. 1989. The lineage as cultural invention: the case of the Pearl River Delta, *Modern China* 15:4-36.

Filmer, Deon and Lant Pritchett. Forthcoming. Determinants of Education Enrollment in India: child, household, village and state effects, *Journal of Educational Planning and Administration*.

Fried, Morton. 1969 [1953]. *Fabric of Chinese society: a study of the social life of a Chinese county seat*, 2nd ed. New York: Octagon.

Gates, Hill. 1996. *China's Motor: a thousand years of petty capitalism*, Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.

Goldstein, Joshua. 1998. Scissors, Surveys, and Psycho-Prophylactics: Prenatal Health Care Campaigns and State Building in China, 1949-1954, in *Historical Sociology* 11(2): 153-184.

Government of India. 1974. *Towards equality: Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India.* New Delhi: Department of Social Welfare.

Gu, Lanying. 1997. Women Workers' Rights in Joint Ventures, *Women of China* 4:6-7, Beijing: Foreign Language Press.

Heimsath, Charles S. 1964. *Indian nationalism and Hindu social reform.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Honig, Emily and Gail Hershatter. 1988. *Personal Voices: Chinese Women in the 1980s.* Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Hu, Hsien-chin. 1948. *The common descent group in China and its functions*, New York: Viking Fund.

Huang Rongqing and Liu . 1995. *Mortality Data of China,* Beijing: China Population Publishing House.

International Institute for Population Science (IIPS). 1995. *National Family Health Survey (MCH and Family Planning), India 1992-93.* Bombay: IIPS.

Jeong, Yeon-Ang. 1994. *A Study on Management Practices for Female Workers in Korean Firms.* Seoul: The Korea Labor Institute (in Korean).

Kim, Elim. 1991. *A Study of the Family Law and Its Reform Movement.* Seoul: Korean Women's Development Institute (in Korean).

Kim, Joo-Soo. 1993. *Korean Family Law and Its Task.* Seoul: Samyoung-sa.

Kim, Young-Hwa. 1990.. Labor and Inequality, in Ho-Keun Song (ed.). *Labor Market Segregation and Gender Inequality in Wage,s* Pp. 275-324 . Seoul: Nanam (in Korean).

Kim, Yung-Chung. 1986. Women's Movement in Modern Korea, in Se-wha Chung (ed.) *Challenges for Women*, Pp. 75-102. Seoul: Ewha Women's University Press.

Koo, Hagen. 1987. The Interplay of State, Social Class, and World System in East Asian Development: The Cases of South Korea and Taiwan, in Frederic C. Deyo (ed.) *The Political Economy of the New Asian Industrialism*, Pp. 165-181. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Kosambi, Meera. 1996. Gender reform and competing state controls over women: the Rakhmabai case (1884-1888), in Patricia Uberoi ed. *Social Reform, Sexuality and the State*, New Delhi: Sage Publications pp. 265-290.

Lee, Kyung-Soon. 1989. Women's Images in Mass Media, *Monthly Women*, June. Seoul: Korea Women's Associations (in Korean).

Lee, Man-Gap. 1982. *Sociology and Social Change in Korea.* Seoul: Seoul National University Press.

Lee, Sunhwa. 1997. Elite Education for Career or Marriage: The Case of Female University Graduates in South Korea, Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago.

Li, Xiaojiang and Xiaodan Zhang. 1994. Creating a Space for Women: Women's Studies in China, *Signs* 20: 137-51.

Lin Liangmin et al. 1996 An Analysis on Infant and Child Mortality of China in 1991, *Population Research* 20(4): 50-56(in Chinese).

Lu, Meiyi and Yongfu Zhen. 1990. *Chinese Women's Movement 1840-1921*, China: the People's Publishing House in Henan.

Lu Yun, 1988. New Challenges to Women's Employment. *Beijing Review* 31(44):18-21.

McGinn, Noel F., Donald R. Snodgrass, Yung Bong Kim, Shin-Bok Kim, and Quee-Young Kim. 1980. *Education and Development in Korea*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Nair, Janaki. 1996. *Women and law in colonial India: a social history*. New Delhi: Kali for Women.

Nam, Jeong-Lim. 1991. Income Inequality between the Sexes and the Role of the State: South Korea, 1960-1990, Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation. Indiana University.

Palley, Marian Lief. 1994. Feminism in a Confucian Society: The Women's Movement in Korea, in Joyce Gelb and Marian Lief Palley (eds.) *Women of Japan and Korea* Pp. 274-294, Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Park, Chai-Bin and Nam-Hoon Cho. 1995. Consequences of son preferences in a low-fertility society: imbalance of the sex ratio at birth in Korea, *Population and Development Review* 21(1): 59-84.

Parashar, Archana. 1992. *Women and family law reform in India: Uniform civil code and gender equality*. New Delhi: Sage Publications.

Park, Sook-Ja. 1992. Structural Aspects of Sex Discrimination in the Korean Labor Market: Screening Process in Recruitment, *Korean Social Science Journal* 18:49-72.

Public Report on Basic Education [PROBE Report].1999. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Rofel, Lisa. 1994. Longing: Women and Popular Culture. Pp.292-302, in Li Xiaojiang and Zhu Hong (eds.) *Gender and China*, Beijing: Sanlian Books.

Saradamoni, K. 1996. Women's rights and the decline of matriliny in southern India, in Rajni Palriwala and Carla Risseuw (eds.) *Shifting circles of support: Contextualising gender and kinship in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa*, pp. 133-54. New Delhi: Sage Publications.

Schurmann, Franz. 1968. *Ideology and organization in Communist China*, Berkeley: University of California Press.

Sidel, Ruth and Victor Sidel. 1982. *The Health of China*, Boston: Beacon Press.

Shiva, Mira, Omita Goyal and Poonam Krishnan. 1992. *The state of India's health: Women and health*. New Delhi: Voluntary Health Association of India.

Sohn, Seong Young, and Jung-Ah Cho. 1993. A Study of College-Educated Women in the Workplace, *Journal of Women's Studies* 10: 183-243, edited by Women's Study Institute. Seoul: Ewha Women's University (in Korean).

Uberoi, Patricia, ed. 1996. *Social reform, sexuality and the state*. New Delhi: Sage Publications.

United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Seoul. 1998. *Combating Poverty: The Korean Experience*. Seoul: UNDP Seoul.

Visaria, Leela. 1999. Deficit of women in India: Magnitude, trends, regional variations and determinants, in Bharati Ray and Aparna Basu, eds., *From Independence towards freedom: Indian women since 1947*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 80-99.

Whang, In-Joung. 1981. *Management of Rural Change in Korea.* Seoul: Seoul National University Press.

Wolf, Margery. 1985. *Revolution Postponed: Women in Contemporary China*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Zhao, Yan. 1997. Women's Image and Gender View in Mass Media, in Zhao Yan and Guo Li (eds.) *Social Change and Women's Development*, Pp.271-78, Beijing: Chinese Women Publishing House.

Table 1
Number Of Girls "Missing" Per Thousand Livebirths

	China 1989-90	S.Korea 1992	India 1981-91
No. of excess deaths age 0-4, per 1000 female livebirths[1]	13	–	36
No. of excess abortions per 1000 female livebirths[2]	48 - 81	70	9
Total number of girls missing per 1000 female livebirths	61 - 94	70	45
Total number of girls missing per 1000 livebirths (m+f)	30 - 46	34	22
0-4 mortality rate, 1991	61	14 – 17[3]	109 - 119

[1] Computed from the sex differential in recorded mortality, compared with West model life tables for the prevailing life expectancy.

[2] Computed from the recorded sex ratio at birth, assuming a normal ratio of 106. For China, the lower estimates are based on Zeng Yi et al's (1993) recalculation of the 1990 Census figures.

[3] The lower estimate is from Korean lifetables, the higher estimates from vital statistics.

Source: Das Gupta et al., 1997.
Computed from: Huang and Liu 1995; Sample Registration System of India; 1990 Census of China; Park and Cho 1995; Das Gupta and Bhat 1997; Lin Liangmin et al.1996; International Institute for Population Science 1995.

Table 2
GNP per capita and percent of population living in rural areas: India, China and South Korea around 1950.

	GNP per capita	% rural
India	51.9 (1950)	82.7 (1951)
China	31.3 (1955)	89.4 (1953)
S.Korea	76.1 (1953)	82.8 (1949)

Sources:
1. Per capita income:
- S.M.Kansal.1974. *Changes in the per capita income and the per capita availability of essential commodities in India since 1931,* New Delhi: Economic and Scientific Research Foundation.
- PRC State Statistical Bureau. 1985. *Statistical Yearbook of China, 1985* Oxford, New York, Tokyo: Oxford University Press.
- The Bank of Korea. *National Income Statistics Yearbook* 1971.

2. Percent rural in national census held nearest to the year 1950:
- Census of India 1951
- PRC State Statistical Bureau. 1985. *Statistical Yearbook of China, 1985* Oxford, New York, Tokyo: Oxford University Press.
- Lee On-Jook. 1980. *Urban-to-Rural Return Migration in Korea*, Seoul: Seoul National University Press

Table 3
Social and Economic Indicators, India, China, and South Korea (1995)

	India	China	S. Korea
GNP per capita (US$)	340	620	9700
GNP per capita (US$, PPP*)	1400	2920	11450
% urban	27	30	81
% of GDP from agriculture	29	21	7
Male life expectancy at birth	62	68	68
Female life expectancy at birth	63	71	76
Total fertility rate	3.2	1.9	1.8
Female adult illiteracy rate	62	27	3
Female labor force participation	32	45	40
Infant Mortality rate per thousand)	68	34	10
% of poverty ($1 a day) (PPP*)	52.5**	29.42***	NA

Source: The World Bank *World Development Indicators 1997.*

*: Purchasing Power Parity

**: 1992

***: 1993.

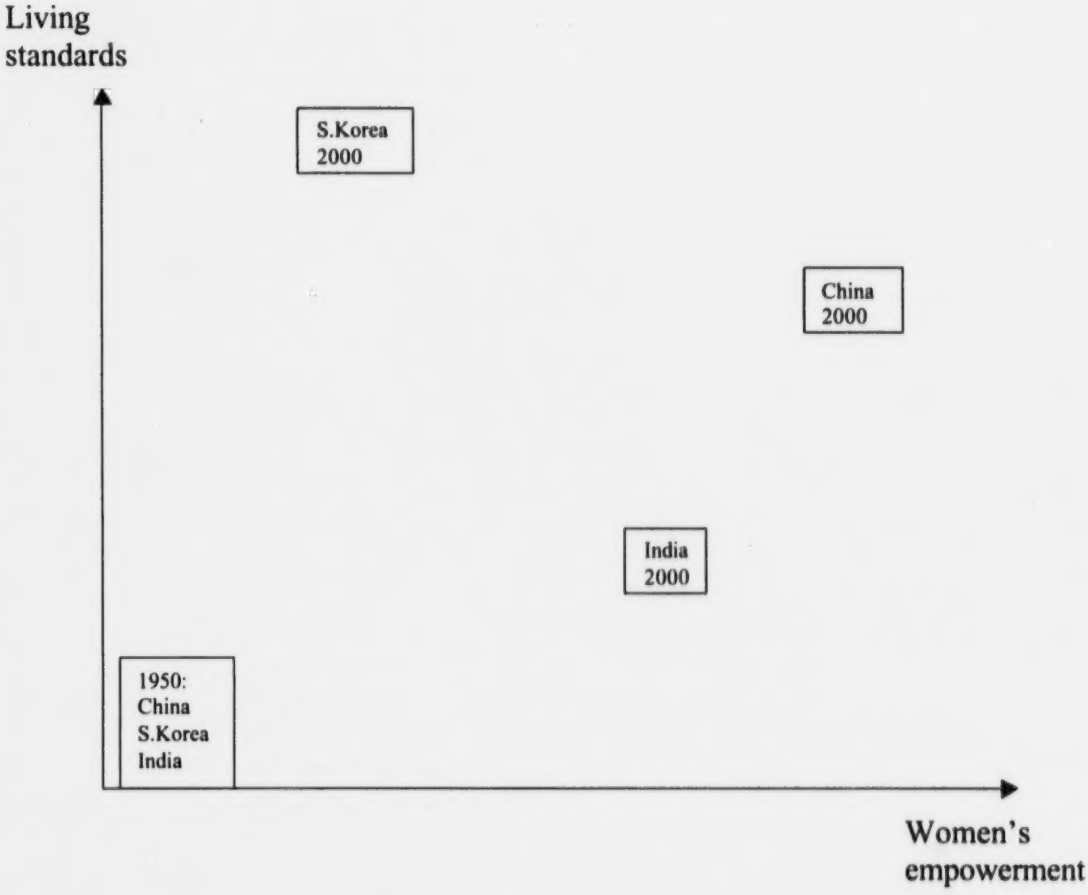
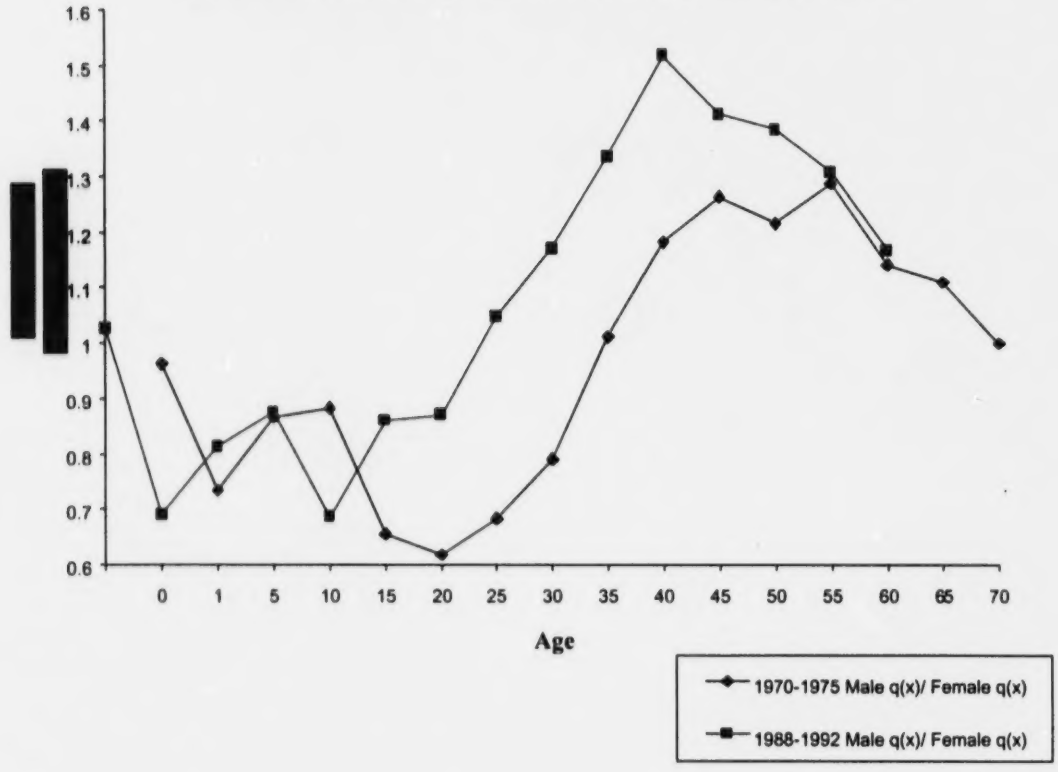


Figure 1
Schematic representation of changes in women's lives along two dimensions, China, S. Korea and India 1950-2000

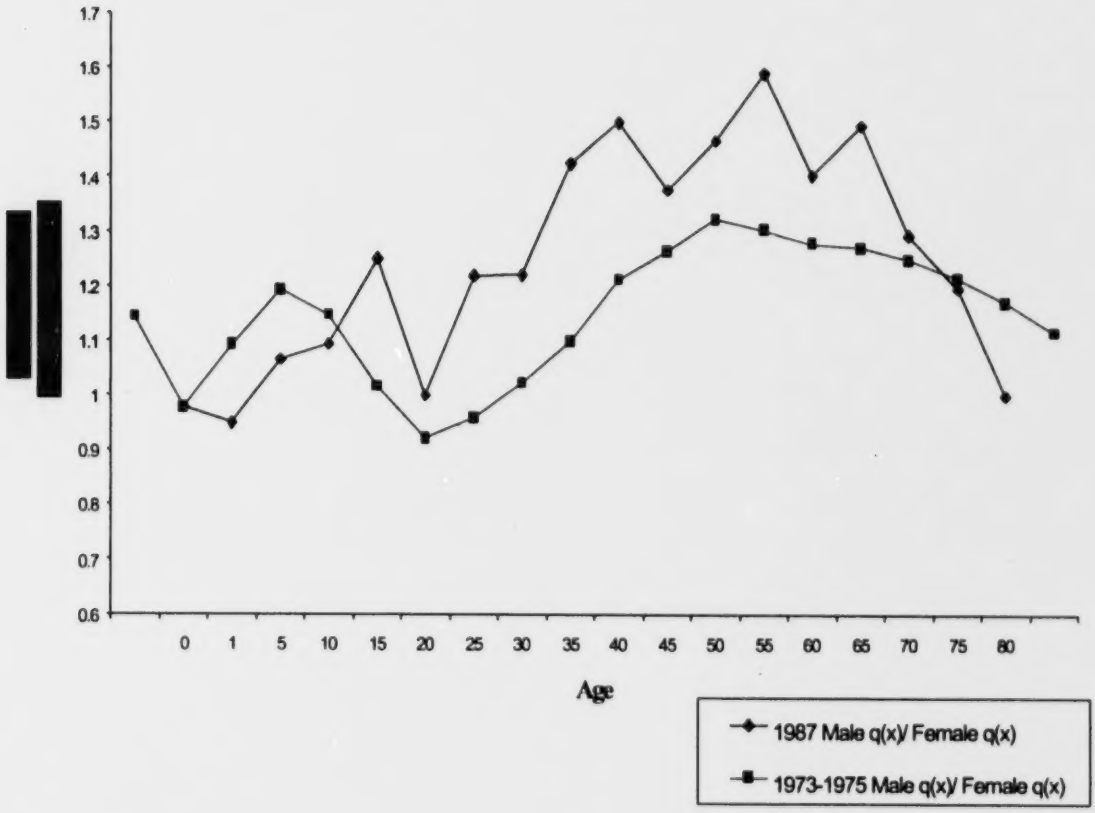
Note: The coordinates of each country are imprecise and intended merely to illustrate broad differences between the countries.

Figure 2
Trends in the ratio of Male to Female Mortality in India, 1970-1990



Source: Government of India, Sample Registration Bulletin 16(1), June 1982, and SRS Based Abridged Life Tables 1988-92, New Delhi: Registrar-General of India.

Figure 3
Trends in the ratio of Male to Female Mortality in China, 1973-1987



Source: Hang, Yonqing and Liu, Yan. *Mortality Data of China Population*. China Population Publishing House, Beijing, 1995. Pg.19-20